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# Gridiron Greats: Eat and Drink Like the Locals on Super Bowl Sunday

**Authentic hometown dishes for fans of the New Orleans Saints and Indianapolis Colts, with 20 wines priced at \$20 or under to match**

*Robert Taylor*

Posted: February 1, 2010

A successful Super Bowl party requires a few key components: good company, a competitive game and, for those not necessarily gridiron-inclined, entertaining commercials. But no matter how one-sided the game or groan-inducing the ads, great food and drink will save your Sunday every time. And this year, partygoers are in luck when it comes to the cuisines of Super Bowl XLIV's competitors, the New Orleans Saints and the Indianapolis Colts. Also included here are 20 food-friendly wines priced at \$20 or less.

Everyone should be well-acquainted with the bounty of fan favorites associated with the Crescent City, and chef Emeril Lagasse talks Super Bowl-party staples for this year's feature, including jambalaya, red beans and rice and more, along with wine pairings. Not so familiar to those who've never lived in the Midwest—Indiana in particular—is the Hoosier state breaded pork tenderloin sandwich. To get a look at this local specialty we turned to some of Indiana's longest-running and most popular makers of the unique sandwich, including the owner of the diner where it was first sold commercially, in 1908. For 'loin sandwich wine pairings, we talk to the owner of Sonoma's Kokomo winery, named for the small Indiana town from which he hails. (Kokomo's owner also tells us about an Indiana fair specialty known as the "walking taco"... more on that later.)

Not unlike po'boys and jambalaya, it's fair to call chef Lagasse a New Orleans institution. Despite being a native New Englander, Lagasse learned French cuisine in Paris and Lyon before coming to prominence as the executive chef at New Orleans' Commander's Palace restaurant, long considered the Big Easy's premier dining destination. (In a sign of just how important the Saints' first trip to the Super Bowl has become for New Orleanians, Commander's—which has always been open 365 days a year—will be closed this Sunday.) Emeril now has his own restaurant empire, stretching from Las Vegas to Miami and beyond, not to mention the television obligations required of a celebrity chef, but he'll always be associated with "New New Orleans" cuisine.



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For fans hoping to bring a taste of New Orleans to their festivities this weekend, Lagasse has the field covered. "In New Orleans, you're talking about red beans and rice, jambalaya, gumbo and poor boys," Lagasse says. "My friends will do an old-fashioned crawfish boil with all the fixin's and gumbo, and that's where the party's going to be." Nearly every Louisiana matriarch has her own version of jambalaya, but there are a few key ingredients common to all. "You can do all kinds of jambalaya," Lagasse says, "but whether you do it with chicken, shrimp or vegetables, you've got to have some spicy sausage—chorizo or andouille or a smoked sausage—and you've gotta have the trinity [bell pepper, onions and celery] to give it that instant foundation." Tomatoes are a point of contention among jambalaya enthusiasts—outside of New Orleans you won't find them in a traditional jambalaya, but in the city, they're a common addition. "Mine will have tomatoes," he says.

*No New Orleans Super Bowl party is complete without shrimp and smoked sausage jambalaya.*

Red beans and rice is another New Orleans essential, and Lagasse lays down the guidelines for that game-day favorite as well. “For red beans and rice, you’ve got to have onion, garlic and celery. With me, you’ll get bell pepper, and I’m going to add smoked sausage. The thing about red beans is, the simpler you leave it, the better they are. I season mine with salt, pepper and cayenne, and I’ll also add chopped ham,” Lagasse says. “And you want to make that on Friday or Saturday—they’re better a day or two after you cook them.”

It’s also oyster season—February is one of the best months for fresh oysters—and Lagasse says you’ll see gigantic shrimp and oyster po’boys at many a New Orleans Super Bowl party, sliced the same way you might find classic six-foot subs elsewhere.

As for wines to pair with the bold cuisine of New Orleans, Lagasse recommends Riesling, Chenin Blanc and Pinot Gris with spicy foods, but says reds have their place as well. “My wife is a red wine freak,” he says, “but we’ll go with lighter reds—a Pinot or a Merlot.”



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*Shrimp po'boys will abound in New Orleans on Super Bowl Sunday.*



Michael Stern/Roadfood.com

*The original Hoosier state pork tenderloin sandwich, as prepared at Nick's Kitchen in Huntington, Ind.*

Up in Indiana’s corn country, traditional Midwest fare dominates, including fried chicken, corn bread, pot roast and meatloaf, but one dish stands alone among Indiana’s native foods: the Hoosier state breaded pork tenderloin sandwich. “In Indiana, they’re everywhere—Chinese restaurants have them, Mexican restaurants have them—and once you take one step out of Indiana, with the exception of Iowa, they pretty much don’t exist,” says Jensen Rufe, a television and film director whose 1998 documentary *In Search of the Famous Hoosier Breaded Pork Tenderloin Sandwich* is something of a Midwest foodie cult classic.

The sandwich has Old World origins. In the 19th century, Indiana became home to a large group of German settlers, who brought their fondness for wiener schnitzel with them. The fried pork tenderloin evolved from the ingredients at hand (much the same way its cousin, the chicken-fried steak, was created by Texas’ German settlers), and the first to sell the tenderloin sandwich commercially in Indiana was a German immigrant named Nick Frienstein, who opened Nick’s Kitchen in Huntington, Ind., in 1908, according to the current owner of Nick’s Kitchen, Jean Anne Bailey. “My father bought Nick’s Kitchen in 1969, and I’ve owned it since 1989, when he

retired,” Bailey says.

While Nick’s receives credit as the originator, every Indiana ’loin lover has their favorite. Rufe’s is Mr. Dave’s, in North Manchester Ind. Founded by Dave Clapp in 1962, the restaurant is now run by his son, Kevin Clapp, who provides the basics for making an authentic pork tenderloin sandwich. “We start out with center-cut pork loins, trim ’em up, then cut them into 3- to 4-ounce portions,” Clapp says. The tenderloins are then tenderized, in the same method as cube steak, and then dipped into an egg-and-milk solution, “what some people call ‘gunk,’” Clapp says. “Then we use a cracker-meal breading and lightly pound it in with a wooden hammer. We go through the breading process twice, and then let them set up in the cooler for a couple of hours.” (At Nick’s Kitchen, Bailey marinates her tenderized pork loins overnight in a solution of buttermilk, eggs and flour.) “Then we drop it in the frier at 365°, and when it floats to the top, it’s done,” Clapp finishes. The large fried tenderloin disk, some of which are as large as a vinyl record, is then placed on an almost comical hamburger bun, and the most popular garnishes are pickles, onions and mustard. “The classic breaded tenderloin sticks out from the bun so that the bun is almost not even functional,” says Rufe. “If you picture Saturn, that’s almost what it looks like.”



David Stovall

*Father-and-son tenderloin sandwich team Kevin and David Clapp make some of Indiana's best.*

Rufe and Clapp also confirmed one other Indiana fair specialty that may delight Colts fans. “One thing I’ve only had in Indiana is the ‘walking taco,’” says Rufe. “You take an individual-size bag of Fritos and glop a ladle full of chili in there, maybe with some cheese and onions, shake that sucker up and eat it with a spork.” Clapp confirms, “My wife, Tina, gets [walking tacos] all the time ... it’s a little too messy for me.”



David Stovall

*The classic pork tenderloin sandwich is garnished with pickles, lettuce, tomato, onion and your choice of condiments.*

For wine pairing with Indiana’s culinary specialties, a pair of Indiana natives now making wine in Sonoma County offer their suggestions. Erik Miller (a native of Kokomo, Ind.) is owner and winemaker of Kokomo winery, where he specializes in Pinot Noir and also makes Cabernet, Zinfandel and more, along with a Sonoma extra-virgin olive oil. Kokomo assistant winemaker Josh Bartels is from Carmel, Ind., and was Miller’s roommate at Purdue University. “We would say the breaded pork tenderloin sandwich would go great with our Sonoma County Zinfandel (\$22),” Miller says, “and Josh thinks even a Pinot Noir, which always works with pork.”

There’s no need to take your Super Bowl food-and-wine pairings *too* seriously though. As Jean Anne Bailey from Nick’s Kitchen tells us, “the best thing to drink with a pork tenderloin sandwich is one of our chocolate milkshakes.”

The following list of wines, all of which are widely available and priced at \$20 or less, were selected for their food-friendly flavor profiles. In addition to the wines suggested by chef Emeril Lagasse and winemaker Erik Miller above, which include Riesling, Pinot Gris, Merlot, Pinot Noir and Zinfandel, we’ve also included a selection of Sauvignon Blancs, which are ideal matches for oysters. Also listed here are some value-priced Cabernet, Chardonnay and Syrah bottlings, all of which will hold up well when paired with the aforementioned bold Super Bowl dishes. And for post-game celebrations, we’ve even included a Carneros blanc de noirs.

## Recommended Food-Friendly Value Wines

### **CHATEAU STE. MICHELLE Sauvignon Blanc Horse Heaven Hills Horse Heaven Vineyard 2008 Score: 90 | \$15**

Bright and vibrant, playing grapefruit and lime against pretty floral and mint notes, lingering teasingly. Drink now. 20,000 cases made. —H.S.

### **COLUMBIA CREST Cabernet Sauvignon Horse Heaven Hills H3 2007 Score: 90 | \$15**

Polished and silky in texture, with ripe blackberry, currant and mint flavors that keep sailing through the long, expressive finish. The tannins are beautifully integrated. Best from 2011 through 2017. 30,000 cases made. —H.S.

### **SCHLOSS VOLLRADS Riesling QbA Rheingau 2008 Score: 90 | \$18**

A beautiful white, off-dry yet vibrant and vivid, featuring apricot and peach, with underlying spice and mineral flavors. It’s all balanced and well put together, with a clean finish. Drink now through 2018. 3,500 cases imported. —B.S.

### **YEALANDS Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough 2008 Score: 90 | \$12**

Bright and focused, offering a lively mouthful of pear, grapefruit and floral aromas and flavors on a juicy frame, finishing with finesse. Drink now. 5,000 cases imported. —H.S.

### **ACROBAT Pinot Noir Oregon 2008 Score: 89 | \$20**

This tangy red offers bright berry and spice flavors that sail through the vibrant frame. Finishes on a candied apple note. Drink now through 2012. 4,500 cases made. —H.S.

### **COLUMBIA CREST Chardonnay Horse Heaven Hills H3 2008 Score: 89 | \$15**

Ripe and generous, not heavy, but heady with spice-accented pear, honey and floral aromas and flavors, echoing nicely. Drink now. 37,000 cases made. —H.S.

### **C.G. DI ARIE Zinfandel Sierra Foothills 2007 Score: 88 | \$18**

Vibrant and juicy. Wild berry and white pepper aromas lead to jammy boysenberry pie and anise flavors. Drink now through 2014. 3,000 cases made. —T.F.

### **CHATEAU ST. JEAN Fumé Blanc Sonoma County 2008 Score: 88 | \$13**

Intense smoke and honeysuckle aromatics mingle well together, leading to crisp and refreshing lemon, tangerine and yellow apple flavors on a medium body, with good acidity. The smoke flavors persist on the finish. Drink now. 42,000 cases made. —*M.W.*

**COLUMBIA CREST Riesling Columbia Valley Grand Estates 2008 Score: 88 | \$11**

Ripe and lively on a light frame, offering plenty of apricot and pear flavors against a nice line of acidity, which keeps this refreshing through the generous finish. Drink now. 8,000 cases made. —*H.S.*

**DRY CREEK Merlot Dry Creek Valley 2006 Score: 88 | \$19**

Lively, with appealing plum and toasty oak aromas and soft, juicy cherry and spice notes. Drink now through 2012. 3,736 cases made. —*T.F.*

**FREI BROTHERS Chardonnay Russian River Valley Reserve 2007 Score: 88 | \$20**

Ripe, floral, peachy Chardonnay flavors are clean, delicate and full-bodied, but not heavy, ending with a subtle touch of oak. Drink now through 2014. 84,600 cases made. —*J.L.*

**GLORIA FERRER Blanc de Noirs Carneros NV Score: 88 | \$20**

This festive bubbly offers floral strawberry and citrus aromas and crisp, juicy watermelon, spicy vanilla and mineral flavors. Drink now. 45,000 cases made. —*T.F.*

**FRITZ HASSELBACH Riesling QbA Rheinhessen Fritz's 2008 Score: 88 | \$13**

Offers flavors of apple and nectarine, with a hint of mineral. Round and fruity, yet with enough acidity to keep it all bright and lingering through the finish. Drink now. 10,000 cases made. —*B.S.*

**HOGUE Fumé Blanc Columbia Valley 2008 Score: 88 | \$11**

Bright and refreshing, with a floral edge to the grapefruit and pear flavors. Drink now. 34,000 cases made. —*H.S.*

**PEACHY CANYON Zinfandel Paso Robles Westside 2007 Score: 88 | \$19**

This lush red is full of fresh plum and pepper aromas, with supple raspberry, earthy sage and licorice notes. Drink now through 2014. 9,200 cases made. —*T.F.*

**ROGER PERRIN Côtes du Rhône Cuvée Prestige Vieilles Vignes 2007 Score: 88 | \$19**

Muscular, with a briary edge to the black cherry, chestnut, violet and mineral notes that move through a slightly rustic finish. Drink now. 3,000 cases made. —*J.M.*

**ROOTS RUN DEEP Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Educated Guess 2007 Score: 88 | \$20**

This is intense and firm, with a wild edge to the berry, herb, sage and cedar notes, but it works. Full-bodied, at times elegant, balanced and complex. Drink now through 2015. 25,000 cases made. —*J.L.*

**ROSENBLUM Syrah California Vintner's Cuvée 2007 Score: 88 | \$13**

Offers an elegant mix of ripe, juicy, grapey wild berry, spice, mineral, loamy earth and sage notes that are complex, focused, balanced and complete. Drink now through 2015. 12,500 cases made. —*J.L.*

**VILLA MARIA Pinot Noir Marlborough Private Bin 2008 Score: 88 | \$20**

Light and easygoing, with ripe cherry and cocoa aromas and flavors, lingering softly on the finish. Drink now through 2012. 3,000 cases imported. —*H.S.*

**WILLAMETTE VALLEY Pinot Gris Willamette Valley 2008 Score: 88 | \$15**

Light and fresh, brimming with nectarine and melon fruit, lingering on the open-textured finish. Drink now. 24,000 cases made. —*H.S.*